

MESSAGE

OF THE

President of the United States.

FELLOW CITIZENS OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

After a brief interval the Congress of the United States resumes its annual legislative labors. An all-wise and merciful Providence has abated the pestilence which visited our shores, leaving its calamitous traces upon some portions of our country. Peace, order, tranquillity and civil authority have been formally declared to exist throughout the whole of the United States. In all of the Civil states authority has superseded the coercion of arms, and the people, by their voluntary action, are maintaining their governments in full activity and complete operation.

RESTORATION OF PEACE AND GOOD FEELING.

The enforcement of the laws is no longer "subverted in any State by combinations too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings;" and the unanimous engendered by the was rapidly yielding to the beneficial influences of our free institutions, and to the kindly effects of unrestricted social and commercial intercourse. An entire restoration of fraternal feeling must be the earnest wish of every patriotic heart; and we will have accomplished our greatest national achievements when, forgetting the past events of the past, and remembering only their instructive lessons, we resume our onward career as a free, prosperous and united people.

In my message of the 4th of December, 1865, Congress was informed of the measures which had been instituted by the Executive with a view to the gradual restoration of the States in which the insurrection occurred to their relations with the general government. Provisional Governors had been appointed, Conventions called, Governors elected, Legislatures assembled, and Senators and Representatives chosen to the Congress of the United States. Courts had been opened for the enforcement of laws long in abeyance. The blockade had been removed, custom houses re-established, and the internal revenue laws put in force, in order that the people might contribute to the national income. Postal operations had been resumed, and efforts were made to restore them to their former condition of efficiency. The States themselves had been asked to take part in the high function of amending the constitution, and of thus sanctioning the extinction of African slavery as one of the legitimate results of our interne struggle.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE SOUTH.

Having progressed thus far, the Executive Department found that it had accomplished nearly all that was within the scope of its constitutional authority. One thing, however, yet remained to be done before the work of restoration could be completed, and that was the admission of Congress of loyal Senators and Representatives from the States whose people had rebelled against the lawful authority of the general government. That question devolved upon the respective Houses which, by the constitution, are made the judges of the elections, returns and qualifications of their own members, and its consideration at once engaged the attention of Congress.

In the meantime the Executive Department—no other plan having been proposed by Congress—continued its efforts to perfect, as far as practicable, the restoration of the proper relations between the citizens of the respective States, the States and the federal government, extending from time to time, as the public interests seemed to require, the judicial, revenue and postal systems of the country. With the advice and consent of the Senate, the necessary officers were appointed, and appropriations made by Congress for the payment of their salaries. The proportion to amend the federal constitution, so as to prevent the existence of slavery within the United States or any place subject to their jurisdiction, was ratified by the requisite number of States, and on the 18th day of December, 1865, it was officially declared to have become valid as a part of the constitution of the United States. All of the States in which the insurrection had existed promptly amended their constitutions, so as to make them conform to the great change thus effected in the organic law of the land; declared null and void all ordinances and laws of secession; repudiated all pretended debts and obligations created for the revolutionary purposes of the insurrection; and proceeded, in good faith, to the enactment of measures for the protection and amelioration of the condition of the colored race. Congress, however, yet hesitated to admit any of these States to representation; and it was not until towards the close of the eighth month of the session that an exception was made in favor of Tennessee, by the admission of her Senators and Representatives.

THE CONGRESSIONAL OPINION.

I deem it a subject of profound regret that Congress has thus far failed to admit to seats loyal Senators and Representatives from the other States, whose inhabitants, with those of Tennessee, had engaged in the rebellion. Ten States—more than one-fourth of the whole number—remain without representation; the seats of fifty members in the House of Representatives and of twenty members in the Senate are yet vacant—not by their own consent, not by a failure of election, but by the refusal of Congress to accept their credentials. Their admission, it is believed, would have accomplished much towards the removal and strengthening of our relations with the colored and removed serious cause for discontent on the part of the inhabitants of those States. It would have accorded with the great principles enunciated in the Declaration of American Independence, that no people ought to bear the burthen of taxation, and yet be denied the right of representation. It would have been in consonance with the express provisions of the constitution, that "each State without its consent, shall be deprived of its equal suffrage in the Senate." These provisions were intended to secure to every State, and to the people of every State, the right of representation in each House of Congress; and so important was it deemed by the framers of the constitution that the equality of the States in the Senate should be preserved, that not even by an amendment of the constitution can any State, without its consent, be denied a voice in that branch of the national legislature.

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE STATES RESTAURANT.

It is true it has been assumed that the existence of the States was terminated by the rebellious acts of their inhabitants, and that the insurrection having been suppressed, they were thenceforward to be considered merely as conquered territories. The Legislative Executive and Judicial Departments of the government have, however, with great distinctness and uniform consistency, refused to sanction an assumption so incompatible with the nature of our republican system, and with the professed objects of the war. Throughout the recent legislation of Congress, the undeniable fact makes itself apparent, that these ten political communities are nothing less than States of this Union. At the very commencement of the rebellion, each house declared, with a unanimity as remarkable as it was significant, that the war was not "waged, upon our part, in any spirit of oppression, nor for any purpose of conquest or subjugation, nor purpose of overthrowing or interfering with the rights or established institutions of those States, but to defend and maintain the supremacy of the constitution and all laws made in pursuance thereof, and to preserve the Union with all the dignity, equality and rights of the several States unimpaired; and that as soon as these objects were accomplished the war ought to cease." In some instances Senators were permitted to continue their legislative functions, while in other instances Representatives were elected and admitted to seats after their States had formally declared their rights to withdraw from the Union and were endeavoring to maintain that right by force of arms. All of the States whose people were in insurrection, as States, were included in the appointment of the direct tax of twenty millions of dollars annually laid upon the United States by the act approved 5th August, 1861. Congress, by the act of March 4, 1862, and by the appointment of representative of his department during the first year, gave volunteers now remain in the service, and they are being discharged as rapidly as can be replaced by regular troops. The army has been provided with cavalry, provided with wagons, and with horses and mules to be used in the field with leading small arms. The military strength of the nation has been augmented by the discharge of volunteers, the disbandment of unmercifully organized regiments, and the recruitment of experienced soldiers, and the enrollment of men for three years, and more, for the prosecution of our noble characters and rights has been manifested by foreign nations.

The report of the Secretary of War furnishes valuable and important information respecting the operations of his department during the first year. Five hundred volunteers now remain in the service, and they are being discharged as rapidly as can be replaced by regular troops. The army has been provided with cavalry, provided with wagons, and with horses and mules to be used in the field with leading small arms. The military strength of the nation has been augmented by the discharge of volunteers, the disbandment of unmercifully organized regiments, and the recruitment of experienced soldiers, and the enrollment of men for three years, and more, for the prosecution of our noble characters and rights has been manifested by foreign nations.

The entire success of the Atlantic Telegraph, between the continents of Europe and America, has been rendered, and from the unbroken connection standing ready to respond to the national call, large armadas of steamship and ironclad vessels have been gathered and held in readiness for the prosecution of our noble characters and rights has been manifested by foreign nations.

THE OBJECT OF THE WAR WAS TO RESTORE, NOT TO DESTROY THE STATE.

mention upon this subject has been equally definite and uniform, and the purpose of the war was specifically stated in the proclamation issued by my predecessor, on the 22d day of September, 1862. It was then solemnly proclaimed and declared that "hereafter, as hereofore, the war will be prosecuted for the object of practically restoring the constitutional relation between the United States and each of the States and the people thereof, in which States that relation is or may be suspended or disturbed."

The recognition of the States by the Judicial Department of the government has also been clear and conclusive in all proceedings affecting them as States had in the Supreme, Circuit and District Courts.

NO DANGER TO BE APPREHENDED FROM DELOYAL REPRESENTATIVES.

In the admission of Senators and Representatives from any and all of the States there can be no just ground of apprehension that persons who are disloyal will be clothed with the powers of legislation; for this could not happen when the constitution and the laws are enforced by a vigilant and faithful Congress. Each House is made the "judge of the elections, returns and qualifications of its own members," and may, "with the concurrence of two-thirds, expel a member." When a Senator or Representative presents his certificate of election, he may at once be admitted or rejected, or should there be any question as to his eligibility, his credentials may be referred for investigation to the appropriate committee. If admitted to a seat, it is intended that these vessels shall be in proper condition for any emergency, and it is desirable that the bill accepting the same for naval purposes, which passed the House of Representatives, be passed by the Senate, and that the iron-clad fleet be at League Island in the vicinity of Philadelphia, a place, which, under due care should be taken by Congress, was selected by the Secretary of the Navy as the most eligible location for that purpose. The iron-clad fleet, which is to be built, should be provided for the iron-clad fleet. It is intended that these vessels shall be in proper condition for any emergency, and it is desirable that the bill accepting the same for naval purposes, which passed the House of Representatives, be passed by the Senate, and that the iron-clad fleet be at League Island in the vicinity of Philadelphia, a place, which, under due care should be taken by Congress, was selected by the Secretary of the Navy as the most eligible location for that purpose. The iron-clad fleet, which is to be built, should be provided for the iron-clad fleet.

THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

The report of the Postmaster General presents a most satisfactory condition of the postal service, and submits recommendations which deserve the consideration of Congress.

The revenue of the Department for the year ending June 30, 1865, was \$14,366,036,

and the expenditures \$15,352,079, showing an excess of the latter of \$865,000. In anticipation of this deficiency, however, a special appropriation was made by Congress, on the 1st of July, 1865, for the sum of \$700,000 for free mail matter, as a legitimate portion of the revenues may be important to determine the course to be pursued in the future, and that the amount of the deficiency may be increased by the amount of the additional revenue arising from the increase of postage rates.

The amount of the deficiency for the past year was \$1,025,456,436.

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